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TAGS: SNAR MARR CI PE

SUBJECT: NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR MONTESINOS GIVES A GREEN LIG

TO AWACS IN LA JOYA

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1. (U) CONFIDENTIAL. CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR DENNIS

JETT. REASON 1.6 (XL).

HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS COUNTERNARCOTICS ISSUES WITH NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR VLADIMIRO MONTESINOS TORRES. FOLLOWING MONTESINOS' POSITIVE RESPONSE ON 13 MAY (REFTEL) TO THE QUESTION OF LANDING RIGHTS, REFUELING, THIRD COUNTRY RIDERS AND RON FOR US COUNTERDRUG AIR ASSETS OPERATION OUT OF MANTA, THE COUNTRY TEAM DECIDED TO GO FOR THE BRASS RING AND RAISE THE LONG SIMMERING ISSUE OF AWACS ACCESS TO THE LA JOYA AIR BASE IN SOUTHERN PERU. WITHOUT BATTING AN EYE, MONTESINOS STATED THAT AWACS AIRCRAFT ARE WELCOMED AT LA JOYA FOR EXTENDED DEPLOYMENTS WHENEVER THEY ARE AVAILABLE. HE PLACED NO

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RESTRICTIONS ON THE DEPLOYMENTS BEYOND THE NEED FOR NORMAL PRIOR COORDINATION. EXPRESSING HIS CONCERN ABOUT RECENT INCREASES IN THE PRICE OF COCA LEAF AT THE FARMGATE, MONTESINOS STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING A STRONG INTERDICTION CAPABILITY AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT USG AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING ASSETS WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE SOON TO ASSIST IN AIR INTERDICTION.

3. (C) COMMENT: THREE PLUS YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE A USG AEW AIRCRAFT HAS TOUCHED DOWN AT LA JOYA, A SECLUDED BASE IN THE SOUTH OF PERU IDEAL FOR SUCH OPERATIONS. UNFORTUNATELY IT WAS ALSO IDEAL FOR HIDING PERU'S NEW GENERATION AIRCRAFT, MIG-29'S AND SU-25'S. FOR THAT REASON, US AIRCRAFT WERE NOT WELCOMED IN LA JOYA FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, UNTIL NOW. WHILE THE MIG-29'S HAVE BEEN IN THE PUBLIC EYE FOR ALMOST A YEAR, THE SU-25'S ARE STILL A SEMI-STATE SECRET (NO OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION BUT A FAIR AMOUNT OF PRESS PLAY). THE COUNTRY TEAM IS EXTREMELY PLEASED WITH THIS DEVELOPMENT WHICH SIGNIFICANTLY EXPANDS DEPLOYMENT OPTIONS IN PERU. WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE DAY THAT SOME USG AEW AIRCRAFT WILL BE HEADED OUR WAY. JETT

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